

TIM JOHNSON  
SOUTH DAKOTA

RAPID CITY OFFICE: (605) 341-3990  
PO BOX 1098, RAPID CITY, SD 57709

ABERDEEN OFFICE: (605) 226-3440  
PO BOX 1554, ABERDEEN, SD 57402

SIOUX FALLS OFFICE: (605) 332-8896  
PO BOX 1424, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57101

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4104

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
136 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4104  
(202) 224-5842

TDD: (202) 224-8279

TOLL FREE  
1-800-537-0025

E-MAIL: [tim@johnson.senate.gov](mailto:tim@johnson.senate.gov)  
WEB SITE: <http://johnson.senate.gov>

May 5, 2006

The Honorable James Terry Scott  
Chairman  
Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission  
1101 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Fifth Floor  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission has been tasked with an important responsibility – assessing the benefits provided to veterans and their survivors for disabilities or death due to military service. One of the most contentious issues now facing the Commission is whether or not to collect Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) information on veterans during the course of its congressionally mandated study.

Recently, the Commission contacted the Congressional leadership on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, as well as the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, regarding the scope of the Commission's mandate and if it could examine the SSDI program. I believe it is important to assess which benefits are available to our nation's veterans to ensure they receive the compensation they deserve. Having said that, I am concerned that reviewing some types of disability compensation may send the wrong message to our veterans; specifically that Congress is seeking to offset some of the benefits currently provided to disabled veterans.

It is my understanding that the full Commission will decide whether or not to include an examination of SSDI benefits in its report to Congress during an open hearing on May 19<sup>th</sup>. While Congress has the ultimate authority to enact new laws governing disability benefits, I anxiously await the Commission's decision on reviewing SSDI compensation. I trust that the Commission will diligently scrutinize this question and take into consideration all the concerns that have been raised.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Johnson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Johnson  
U.S. Senate